

## Message Text

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PAGE 01     BERN 04159 131048Z

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ACTION SCSE-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 W

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P 131012Z SEP 76

FM AMEMBASSY BERN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3185

UNCLAS BERN 4159

E.O. 11562: N/A

TAGS: CDES, SZ (WHITWORTH, TERRY)

SUBJ: DEATH-TERRY WITHWORTH

REF: STATE 205034

1. EMB HAS WRITTENTO SWISS POLICE  
AUTHORITIES AT BERN RE CONDITION IN WHICH THE  
REMAINS OF THE LATE TERRY WHITWORTH ARRIVED IN THE U.S.  
AND THE UNDERTAKER'S DISREGARD FOR THE SPECIFIC  
INSTRUCTIONS FROM THE EMBASSY.

2. EUROPE EDUCATIONAL TRAVEL CO OFFICE AT THE HAGUE  
ASSURED EMBASSY THAT 4-H CITIZEN AMBASSADOR PROGRAM,  
P.O. BOX 332, PULLMAN WASHINGTON 99163, WOULD ASSUME ALL  
EXPENSES RE PREPARATION AND SHIPMENT OF REMAINS. IT  
IS POSSIBLE MISS RUTH J. SHANE, U.S. PROGRAM DIRECTOR,  
ADVISED MRS. WHITWORTH NOT TO SEND FUNDS. NO FUNDS HAVE  
BEEN RECEIVED FROM 4-H CITIZEN AMBASSADOR PROGRAM. TWO  
CHECKS HAVE BEEN RECEIVED FROM MRS. WHITWORTH, \$497.35  
FOR AIR RESCUE SERVICES AND \$909.44 FOR KLM AIR FREIGHT.  
MISCELLANEOUS SERVICES WILL AMOUNT TO ABOUT \$500.00.

3. ON JULY 18, 1976, 22:00 HRS, MRS. BURNETT AND MRS  
CALLAHAN, LEADERS OF THE GROUP, INFORMED EMB OF  
TERRY'S FATAL ACCIDENT. ON JULY 19, 1976 PARENTS WERE  
OFFICIALLY INFORMED TELEGRAPHICALLY. ON JULY 19, 1976;  
18:27 TELEGRAPHIC REPLY WAS RECEIVED FROM PARENTS REQUESTING  
REMAINS BE RETURNED TO BRADY, TEXAS.

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PAGE 02     BERN 04159 131048Z

4. IT IS UNDERSTOOD MRS WHITWORTH TALKED TO CONSULAR

OFFICER FOLLOWING DAY AND THAT SHE WAS TOLD THAT VIEWING OF REMAINS WAS NOT ADVISABLE. BODY WAS DISFIGURED DUE TO VIOLENT FALL OF ALMOST ONE THOUSAND FEET. IT IS NOT KNOWN WHETHER OR NOT EMBALMMENT WAS MENTIONED BY FAMILY SINCE CONSULAR OFFICER HANDLING CASE DEPARTED POST JULY 29, 1976.

5. AFTER AN ARDOUOUS RESCUE OPERATION THE BODY WAS TRANSFERRED TO KAUFMANN A.G., UNDERTAKER, AT GRINDELWALD. AFTER BODY WAS RETRIEVED, EMBASSY WAS OFFICIALLY INFORMED OF ACCIDENT BY THE GRINDELWALD POLICE. POLICE ASSURED EMB THAT KAUFMANN WAS WELL QUALIFIED AND EXPERIENCED IN SHIPMENT OF REMAINS. EMB HAD NO REASON TO DOUBT ASSURANCE RECEIVED FROM POLICE AUTHORITIES.

6. IT WAS NOT UNTIL JULY 20, 1976, WHEN THE REMAINS WERE READY TO BE TRANSPORTED TO ZURICH, THAT CONSULAR OFFICER DISCOVERED THAT THE BODY HAD NOT BEEN EMBALMED. KAUFMANN ARGUED THAT HE KNEW WHAT HE WAS DOING AND CATEGORICALLY REFUSED TO OPEN THE METAL CONTAINER TO COMPLY WITH EMBASSY'S INSTRUCTIONS. STATED HE WOULD ASSUME FULL RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE MANNER IN WHICH CASE HAD BEEN HANDLED. THAT SAME DAY THE REMAINS WERE DELIVERED TO KLM ZURICH. ON JULY 21, 1976 REMAINS WERE TRANSPORTED TO THE U.S.

7. EMBASSY UNDERSTANDS PADDED METAL CASKET (ZINC OR LEAD) IN OAK BOX IS ACCEPTABLE FOR INTERNATIONAL SHIPMENTS. EMBALMING AS IT IS KNOWN IN THE U.S. WAS MOST LIKELY NOT POSSIBLE DUE TO THE CONDITION OF REMAINS DUE TO ACCIDENT. DURING INFORMAL CONVERSATION WITH GRINDELWALD OFFICIAL HE INTIMATED METAL CASKET HAD BEEN PLACED IN WOODEN BOX BUT THAT METAL CASKET WAS NOT PADDED. HE MAINTAINED CASKET WAS OVER TWO METERS LONG AND THAT BODY WAS 1.85M.

8. REPLY TO OUR LETTER TO POLICE WILL BE TRANSMITTED TO DEPT UPON RECEIPT.  
DAVIS

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